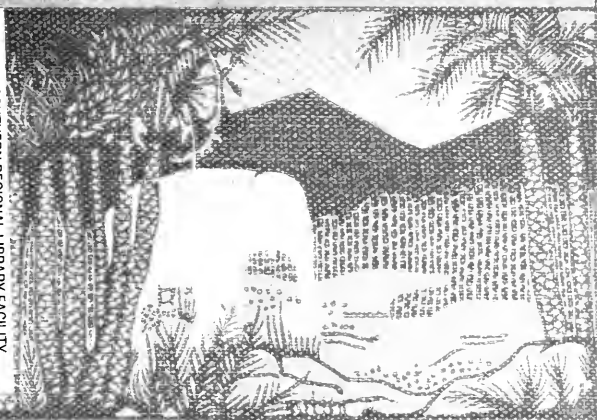


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THE INCARNATION
OF
KRISHNA MULVANEY

BY
RUDYARD KIPLING

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The Incarnation
of
Krishna Mulvaney

The Incarnation *of*
Krishna Mulvaney

BY

RUDYARD KIPLING



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The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney



Wohl auf, my bully cavaliers,
We ride to church to-day.
The man that has n't got a horse
Must steal one straight away.

.
Be reverent, men, remember
This is a Gottes haus.
Du, Conrad, cut along der aisle
And schenck der whiskey aus.

Hans Breitman's Ride to Church.

ONCE upon a time, very
far from England, there
lived three men who
loved each other so greatly that
neither man nor woman could
come between them. They were

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in no sense refined nor to be admitted to the outer-door mats of decent folk, because they happened to be private soldiers in Her Majesty's Army ; and private soldiers of our service have small time for self-culture. Their duty is to keep themselves and their accoutrements specklessly clean, to refrain from getting drunk more often than is necessary, to obey their superiors, and to pray for a war. All these things my friends accomplished ; and of their own motion threw in some fighting-work for which the Army Regulations did not call. Their fate sent them to serve in India, which is not a golden

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country, though poets have sung otherwise. There men die with great swiftness, and those who live suffer many and curious things. I do not think that my friends concerned themselves much with the social or political aspects of the East. They attended a not unimportant war on the northern frontier, another one on our western boundary, and a third in Upper Burma. Then their regiment sat still to recruit, and the boundless monotony of cantonment life was their portion. They were drilled morning and evening on the same dusty parade-ground. They wandered up and down the same

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stretch of dusty white road, attended the same church and the same grog-shop, and slept in the same lime-washed barn of a barrack for two long years. There was Mulvaney, the father in the craft, who had served with various regiments from Bermuda to Halifax, old in war, scarred, reckless, resourceful, and in his pious hours an unequalled soldier. To him turned for help and comfort six and a half feet of slow-moving, heavy-footed Yorkshireman, born on the wolds, bred in the dales, and educated chiefly among the carriers' carts at the back of York railway-station. His name was Learoyd, and his chief virtue

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an unmitigated patience which helped him to win fights. How Ortheris, a fox-terrier of a Cockney, ever came to be one of the trio, is a mystery which even to-day I cannot explain. 'There was always three av us," Mulvaney used to say. 'An' by the grace av God, so long as our service lasts, three av us they'll always be. 'T is betther so."

They desired no companionship beyond their own, and it was evil for any man of the regiment who attempted dispute with them. Physical argument was out of the question as regarded Mulvaney and the Yorkshireman ; and assault on Orthe-

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ris meant a combined attack from these twain — a business which no five men were anxious to have on their hands. Therefore they flourished, sharing their drinks, their tobacco, and their money; good luck and evil; battle and the chances of death; life and the chances of happiness from Calicut in southern, to Peshawur in northern India.

Through no merit of my own it was my good fortune to be in a measure admitted to their friendship — frankly by Mulvaney from the beginning, sullenly and with reluctance by Learoyd, and suspiciously by Ortheris, who held to it that no man not in the

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Army could fraternise with a red-coat. 'Like to like,' said he. 'I'm a bloomin' sodger—he's a bloomin' civilian. 'Taint natural—that's all.'

But that was not all. They thawed progressively, and in the thawing told me more of their lives and adventures than I am ever likely to write.

Omitting all else, this tale begins with the Lamentable Thirst that was at the beginning of First Causes. Never was such a thirst—Mulvaney told me so. They kicked against their compulsory virtue, but the attempt was only successful in the case of Ortheris. He, whose talents were many,

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went forth into the highways and stole a dog from a 'civilian'—*videlicet*, some one, he knew not who, not in the Army. Now that civilian was but newly connected by marriage with the colonel of the regiment, and outcry was made from quarters least anticipated by Ortheris, and, in the end, he was forced, lest a worse thing should happen, to dispose at ridiculously unremunerative rates of as promising a small terrier as ever graced one end of a leading string. The purchase-money was barely sufficient for one small outbreak which led him to the guard-room. He escaped, however, with nothing

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worse than a severe reprimand, and a few hours of punishment drill. Not for nothing had he acquired the reputation of being 'the best soldier of his inches' in the regiment. Mulvaney had taught personal cleanliness and efficiency as the first articles of his companions' creed. 'A dhirty man,' he was used to say, in the speech of his kind, 'goes to Clink for a weakness in the knees, an' is coort-martialled for a pair av socks missin'; but a clane man, such as is an ornament to his service—a man whose buttons are gold, whose coat is wax upon him, an' whose 'coutrements are widout a speck—*that* man may,

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spakin' in reason, do fwhat he likes an' dhrink from day to divil. That 's the pride av bein' dacint.'

We sat together, upon a day, in the shade of a ravine far from the barracks, where a watercourse used to run in rainy weather. Behind us was the scrub jungle, in which jackals, peacocks, the gray wolves of the North-Western Provinces, and occasionally a tiger estrayed from Central India, were supposed to dwell. In front lay the cantonment, glaring white under a glaring sun; and on either side ran the broad road that led to Delhi.

It was the scrub that suggested to my mind the wisdom of Mul-

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vaney taking a day's leave and going upon a shooting-tour. The peacock is a holy bird throughout India, and he who slays one is in danger of being mobbed by the nearest villagers; but on the last occasion that Mulvaney had gone forth, he had contrived, without in the least offending local religious susceptibilities, to return with six beautiful peacock skins which he sold to profit. It seemed just possible then——

‘But fwat manner av use is ut to me goin’ out widout a dhrink? The ground’s powdher-dhry underfoot, an’ ut gets unto the throat fit to kill,’ wailed Mulvaney, looking at me reproachfully. ‘An’ a

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peacock is not a bird you can catch the tail av onless ye run. Can a man run on wather — an' jungle-wather too?'

Ortheris had considered the question in all its bearings. He spoke, chewing his pipe-stem meditatively the while :

‘ Go forth, return in glory,
To Clusium’s royal ’ome :
An’ round these bloomin’ temples ’ang
The bloomin’ shields o’ Rome.

You better go. You ain’t like to shoot yourself — not while there ’s a chanst of liquor. Me an’ Learoyd ’ll stay at ’ome an’ keep shop — ’case o’ anythin’ turnin’ up. But you go out with a gas-pipe gun an’ ketch the little

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peacockses or somethin'. You kin get one day's leave easy as winkin'. Go along an' get it, an' get peacockses or somethin'.'

'Jock,' said Mulvaney, turning to Learoyd, who was half asleep under the shadow of the bank. He roused slowly.

"Sitha, Mulvaaney, go," said he.

And Mulvaney went; cursing his allies with Irish fluency and barrack-room point.

'Take note,' said he, when he had won his holiday, and appeared dressed in his roughest clothes with the only other regimental fowling piece in his hand. 'Take note, Jock, an' you Orth'ris,

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I am goin' in the face av my own will — all for to please you. I misdoubt anythin' will come av permiscuous huntin' afther peacocks in a desolit lan'; an' I know that I will lie down an' die wid thirrrst. Me catch peacocks for you, ye lazy scutts — an' be sacrificed by the peasantry — Ugh !'

He waved a huge paw and went away.

At twilight, long before the appointed hour, he returned empty-handed, much begrimed with dirt.

'Peacocks?' queried Ortheris from the safe rest of a barrack-room table whereon he was smok-

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ing cross-legged, Learoyd fast asleep on a bench.

‘Jock,’ said Mulvaney without answering, as he stirred up the sleeper. ‘Jock, can ye fight? Will ye fight?’

Very slowly the meaning of the words communicated itself to the half-roused man. He understood — and again — what might these things mean? Mulvaney was shaking him savagely. Meantime the men in the room howled with delight. There was war in the confederacy at last — war and the breaking of bonds.

Barrack-room etiquette is stringent. On the direct challenge must follow the direct reply.

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This is more binding than the ties of tried friendship. Once again Mulvaney repeated the question. Learoyd answered by the only means in his power, and so swiftly that the Irishman had barely time to avoid the blow. The laughter around increased. Learoyd looked bewilderedly at his friend — himself as greatly bewildered. Ortheris dropped from the table because his world was falling.

‘Come outside,’ said Mulvaney, and as the occupants of the barrack-room prepared joyously to follow, he turned and said furiously, ‘There will be no fight this night — unless any wan av

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you is wishful to assist. The man that does, follows on.'

No man moved. The three passed out into the moonlight, Learoyd fumbling with the buttons of his coat. The parade-ground was deserted except for the scurrying jackals. Mulvaney's impetuous rush carried his companions far into the open ere Learoyd attempted to turn round and continue the discussion.

'Be still now. 'Twas my fault for beginnin' things in the middle av an end, Jock. I should ha' comminst wid an explanation ; but Jock, dear, on your sowl are ye fit, think you, for the finest fight that iver was — betther than

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fightin' me? Considher before ye answer.'

More than ever puzzled, Learoyd turned round two or three times, felt an arm, kicked tentatively, and answered, 'Ah 'm fit.' He was accustomed to fight blindly at the bidding of the superior mind.

They sat them down, the men looking on from afar, and Mulvaney untangled himself in mighty words.

'Followin' your fools' scheme I wint out into the thrackless desert beyond the barricks. An' there I met a pious Hindu dhriving a bullock-kyart. I tuk ut for granted he wud be delighted for

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to convoy me a piece, an' I jumped in ——'

'You long, lazy, black-haired swine,' drawled Ortheris, who would have done the same thing under similar circumstances.

"'T was the height av policy. That naygur-man dhruv miles an' miles — as far as the new railway line they 're buildin' now back av the Tavi river. "'T is a kyart for dhirt only," says he now an' again timoreously, to get me out uv ut. "Dhirt I am," sez I, "an' the dhryest that you iver kyarted. Dhrove on, me son, an' glory be wid you." At that I wint to slape, an' took no heed till he pulled up on the embank-

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mint av the line where the coolies were pilin' mud. There was a matther av two thousand coolies on that line — you remimber that. Prisintly a bell rang, an' they throops off to a big payshed. “Where's the white man in charge?” says I to my kyart-driver. “In the shed,” says he, “engaged on a riffle.” — “A fwat?” sez I. “Riffle,” sez he. “You take ticket. He take money. You get nothin'.” — “Oh!” sez I, “that's fwat the shuperior an' cultivated man calls a raffle, me misbeguided child av darkness an' sin. Lead on to that raffle, though fwat the mischief 't is doin so far away

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from uts home — which is the charity-bazaar at Christmas, an' the colonel's wife grinnin' behind the tea-table — is more than I know." Wid that I wint to the shed an' found 't was pay-day among the coolies. Their wages was on a table forninst a big, fine, red buck av a man — sivun fut high, four fut wide, an' three fut thick, wid a fist on him like a corn-sack. He was payin' the coolies fair an' easy, but he wud ask each man if he wud raffle that month, an' each man sez. "Yes," av course. Thin he wud deduct from their wages accordin'. Whin all was paid, he filled an ould cigar-box full av gun-wads

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an' scatthered ut among the coolies. They did not take much joy av that performance, an' small wondher. A man close to me picks up a black gun-wad an' sings out, "I have ut." — "Good may ut do you," sez I. The coolie wint forward to this big, fine, red man, who threw a cloth off av the most sumpshus, jooled, enamelled an' variously bedivilled sedan-chair I iver saw.'

'Sedan-chair! Put your 'ead in a bag. That was a palanquin. Don't yer know a palanquin when you see it?' said Ortheris with great scorn.

'I chuse to call ut sedan-chair, an' chair ut shall be, little man,'

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continued the Irishman. ‘’T was a most amazin’ chair — all lined wid pink silk an’ fitted wid red silk curtains. “Here ut is,” sez the red man. “Here ut is,” sez the coolie, an’ he grinned weakly-ways. “Is ut any use to you?” sez the red man. “No,” sez the coolie; “I’d like to make a presint av ut to you.” — “I am graciously pleased to accept that same,” sez the red man; an’ at that all the coolies cried aloud in fwhat was mint for cheerful notes, an’ wint back to their diggin’, lavin’ me alone in the shed. The red man saw me, an’ his face grew blue on his big fat neck. “Fwhat d’ you

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want here?" sez he. "Standin'-room an' no more," sez I, "onless it may be fwhat ye niver had, an' that's manners, ye rafflin' ruffian," for I was not goin' to have the Service throd upon. "Out of this," sez he. "I'm in charge av this section av construction." — "I'm in charge av mesilf," sez I, "an' it's like I will stay a while. D'ye raffle much in these parts?" — "Fwhat's that to you?" sez he. "Nothin'," sez I, "but a great dale to you, for begad I'm thinkin' you get the full half av your revenue from that sedan-chair. Is ut always raffled so?" I sez, an' wid that I wint to a coolie

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to ask questions. Bhoys, that man's name is Dearsley, an' he's been rafflin' that ould sedan-chair monthly this matther av nine months. Ivry coolie on the section takes a ticket — or he gives 'em the go — wanst a month on pay-day. Ivry coolie that wins ut gives ut back to him, for 't is too big to carry away, an' he'd sack the man that thried to sell ut. That Dearsley has been makin' the rowlin' wealth av Roshus by nefarious rafflin'. Think av the burnin' shame to the sufferin' coolie-man that the army in Injia are bound to protect an' nourish in their bosoms! Two

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thousand coolies defrauded wanst a month ! ’

‘ Dom t’ coolies. Has ’t gotten t’ cheer, man ? ’ said Learoyd.

‘ Hould on. Havin’ onearded this amazin’ an’ stupendjus fraud committed by the man Dearsley, I hild a council av war ; he thryin’ all the time to sejuce me into a fight wid opprobrious language. That sedan-chair niver belonged by right to any foreman av coolies. ’Tis a king’s chair or a quane’s. There’s gold on ut an’ silk an’ all manner av trapesemints. Bhoys, ’t is not for me to countenance any sort av wrong-doin’ — me bein’ the ould man — but — anyway he has had

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ut nine months, an' he dare not make throuble av ut was taken from him. Five miles away, or ut may be six ——'

There was a long pause, and the jackals howled merrily. Leayroyd bared one arm, and contemplated it in the moonlight. Then he nodded partly to himself and partly to his friends. Ortheris wriggled with suppressed emotion.

'I thought ye wud see the reasonableness av ut,' said Mulvaney. 'I made bould to say as much to the man before. He was for a direct front attack — fut, horse, an' guns — an' all for nothin', seein' that I had no

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thransport to convey the machine away. "I will not argue wid you," sez I, "this day, but subsequently, Mister Dearsley, me rafflin' jool, we talk ut out lengthways. 'T is no good policy to swindle the naygur av his hard-earned emolumints, an' by presint informashin' " — 't was the kyart man that tould me — "ye've been perpethrating that same for nine months. But I'm a just man," sez I, "an' overlookin' the presumpshin that yondher settee wid the gilt top was not come by honust" — at that he turned sky-green, so I knew things was more throe than tellable — "not come by

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honest, I'm willin' to compound the felony for this month's winnin's."'

'Ah! Ho!' from Learoyd and Ortheris.

'That man Dearsley's rushin' on his fate,' continued Mulvaney, solemnly wagging his head. 'All Hell had no name bad enough for me that tide. Faith, he called me a robber! Me! that was savin' him from continuin' in his evil ways widout a remonstrance—an' to a man av conscience a remonstrance may change the chune av his life. "'Tis not for me to argue," sez I, "fwhatever ye are, Mister Dearsley, but, by my hand, I'll take away the

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temptation for you that lies in that sedan-chair." — "You will have to fight me for ut," sez he, "for well I know you will never dare make report to any one." — "Fight I will," sez I, "but not this day, for I 'm rejuiced for want av nourishment." — "Ye 're an ould bould hand," sez he, sizin' me up an' down; "an' a jool av a fight we will have. Eat now an' dhrink, an' go your way." Wid that he gave me some hump an' whisky — good whisky — an' we talked av this an' that the while. "It goes hard on me now," sez I, wipin' my mouth, "to confiscate that piece av furniture, but justice is

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justice." — "Ye 've not got ut yet," sez he; "there's the fight between." — "There is," sez I, "an' a good fight. Ye shall have the pick av the best quality in my rigimint for the dinner you have given this day." Thin I came hot-foot to you two. Hould your tongue, the both. 'Tis this way. To-morrow we three will go there an' he shall have his pick betune me an' Jock. Jock 's a deceivin' fighter, for he is all fat to the eye, an' he moves slow. Now I'm all beef to the look, an' I move quick. By my reckonin' the Dearsley man won't take me; so me an' Orth'ris 'll see fair play. Jock, I tell you,

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't will be big fightin' — whipped, wid the cream above the jam. Afther the business 'twill take a good three av us — Jock 'll be very hurt — to haul away that sedan-chair.'

'Palanquin.' This from Ortheris.

'Fwhatever ut is, we must have ut. 'T is the only sellin' piece av property widin reach that we can get so cheap. An' fwhat's a fight afther all? He has robbed the naygur-man, dishonust. We rob him honust for the sake av the whisky he gave me.'

'But wot 'll we do with the bloomin' article when we've got it? Them palanquins are as big

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as 'ouses, an' uncommon 'ard to sell, as McCleary said when ye stole the sentry-box from the Curragh.'

'Who 's goin' to do t' fightin'?' said Learoyd, and Ortheris subsided. The three returned to barracks without a word. Mulvaney's last argument clinched the matter. This palanquin was property, vendible, and to be attained in the simplest and least embarrassing fashion. It would eventually become beer. Great was Mulvaney.

Next afternoon a procession of three formed itself and disappeared into the scrub in the direction of the new railway line. Learoyd

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alone was without care, for Mulvaney dived darkly into the future, and little Ortheris feared the unknown. What befell at that interview in the lonely pay-shed by the side of the half-built embankment, only a few hundred coolies know, and their tale is a confusing one, running thus —

‘We were at work. Three men in red coats came. They saw the Sahib — Dearsley Sahib. They made oration; and noticeably the small man among the red-coats. Dearsley Sahib also made oration, and used many very strong words. Upon this talk they departed together to an open space, and there the fat man in

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the red coat fought with Dearsley Sahib after the custom of white men — with his hands, making no noise, and never at all pulling Dearsley Sahib's hair. Such of us as were not afraid beheld these things for just so long a time as a man needs to cook the mid-day meal. The small man in the red coat had possessed himself of Dearsley Sahib's watch. No, he did not steal that watch. He held it in his hand, and at certain seasons made outcry, and the twain ceased their combat, which was like the combat of young bulls in spring. Both men were soon all red, but Dearsley Sahib was much more red than the

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other. Seeing this, and fearing for his life—because we greatly loved him—some fifty of us made shift to rush upon the red-coats. But a certain man—very black as to the hair, and in no way to be confused with the small man, or the fat man who fought—that man, we affirm, ran upon us, and of us he embraced some ten or fifty in both arms, and beat our heads together, so that our livers turned to water, and we ran away. It is not good to interfere in the fightings of white men. After that Dearsley Sahib fell and did not rise, these men jumped upon his stomach and despoiled him of all his money, and attempted to

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fire the pay-shed, and departed. Is it true that Dearsley Sahib makes no complaint of these latter things having been done? We were senseless with fear, and do not at all remember. There was no palanquin near the pay-shed. What do we know about palanquins? Is it true that Dearsley Sahib does not return to this place, on account of his sickness, for ten days? This is the fault of those bad men in the red coats, who should be severely punished; for Dearsley Sahib is both our father and mother, and we love him much. Yet, if Dearsley Sahib does not return to this place at all, we will speak the truth.

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There was a palanquin, for the up-keep of which we were forced to pay nine-tenths of our monthly wage. On such mulctings Dearsley Sahib allowed us to make obeisance to him before the palanquin. What could we do? We were poor men. He took a full half of our wages. Will the Government repay us those moneys? Those three men in red coats bore the palanquin upon their shoulders and departed. All the money that Dearsley Sahib had taken from us was in the cushions of that palanquin. Therefore they stole it. Thousands of rupees were there—all our money. It was our bank-box, to fill which we cheer-

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fully contributed to Dearsley Sahib three-sevenths of our monthly wage. Why does the white man look upon us with the eye of disfavour? Before God, there was a palanquin, and now there is no palanquin; and if they send the police here to make inquisition, we can only say that there never has been any palanquin. Why should a palanquin be near these works? We are poor men, and we know nothing.'

Such is the simplest version of the simplest story connected with the descent upon Dearsley. From the lips of the coolies I received it. Dearsley himself was in no condition to say anything, and

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Mulvaney preserved a massive silence, broken only by the occasional licking of the lips. He had seen a fight so gorgeous that even his power of speech was taken from him. I respected that reserve until, three days after the affair, I discovered in a disused stable in my quarters a palanquin of unchastened splendour — evidently in past days the litter of a queen. The pole whereby it swung between the shoulders of the bearers was rich with the painted *papier-maché* of Cashmere. The shoulder-pads were of yellow silk. The panels of the litter itself were ablaze with the loves of all the gods and goddesses of

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the Hindu Pantheon — lacquer on cedar. The cedar sliding doors were fitted with hasps of translucent Jaipur enamel and ran in grooves shod with silver. The cushions were of brocaded Delhi silk, and the curtains which once hid any glimpse of the beauty of the king's palace were stiff with gold. Closer investigation showed that the entire fabric was everywhere rubbed and discoloured by time and wear ; but even thus it was sufficiently gorgeous to deserve housing on the threshold of a royal zenana. I found no fault with it, except that it was in my stable. Then, trying to lift it by the silver-shod shoulder pole, I

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laughed. The road from Dearsley's pay-shed to the cantonment was a narrow and uneven one, and, traversed by three very inexperienced palanquin-bearers, one of whom was sorely battered about the head, must have been a path of torment. Still I did not recognize the right of the three musketeers to turn me into a 'fence' for stolen property.

'I'm askin' you to warehouse ut,' said Mulvaney when he was brought to consider the question. 'There's no steal in ut. Dearsley tould us we cud have ut if we fought. Jock fought — an', oh, sorr, when the throuble was at uts finest an' Jock was bleedin'

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like a stuck pig, an' little Orth'ris was shquealin' on one leg chewin' big bites out av Dearsley's watch, I wud ha' given my place at the fight to have had you see wan round. He tuk Jock, as I suspicioned he would, and Jock was deceptive. Nine roun's they were even matched, an' at the tenth — About that palanquin now. There's not the least throuble in the world, or we wud not ha' brought ut here. You will ondherstand that the Queen — God bless her! — does not reckon for a privit soldier to kape elephints an' palanquins an' sich in barricks. Afther we had dhragged ut down from Dearsley's through that cruel

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scrub that near broke Orth'ris's heart, we set ut in the ravine for a night; an' a thief av a porcupine an' a civet-cat av a jackal roosted in ut, as well we knew in the mornin'. I put ut to you, sorr, is an elegint palanquin, fit for the princess, the natural abidin' place av all the vermin in canton-mints? We brought ut to you afther dhark, and put ut in your shtable. Do not let your conscience prick. Think of the rejoicin' men in the pay-shed yonder—lookin' at Dearsley wid his head tied up in a towel—an' well knowin' that they can draw their pay ivry month widout stoppages for riffles. Indi-

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rectly, sorr, you have rescued from an onprincipled son av a night-hawk the peasanthry av a numerous village. An' besides, will I let that sedan-chair rot on our hands? Not I. 'T is not every day a piece av pure joolry comes into the market. There's not a king widin these forty miles'— he waved his hand round the dusty horizon— 'not a king wud not be glad to buy ut. Some day meself, whin I have leisure, I'll take ut up along the road an' dishpose av ut.'

‘How?’ said I, for I knew the man was capable of anything.

‘Get into ut, av coorse, and keep wan eye open through the

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curtains. Whin I see a likely man av the native persuasion, I will descind blushin' from my canopy and say, "Buy a palanquin, ye black scutt?" I will have to hire four men to carry me first, though; and that's impossible till next pay-day.'

Curiously enough, Learoyd, who had fought for the prize, and in the winning secured the highest pleasure life had to offer him, was altogether disposed to undervalue it, while Ortheris openly said it would be better to break the thing up. Dearsley, he argued, might be a many-sided man, capable, despite his magnificent fighting qualities, of

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setting in motion the machinery of the civil law — a thing much abhorred by the soldier. Under any circumstances their fun had come and passed ; the next payday was close at hand, when there would be beer for all. Wherefore longer conserve the painted palanquin ?

“ A first-class rifle-shot an’ a good little man av your inches you are,” said Mulvaney. ‘But you niver had a head worth a soft-boiled egg. ’T is me has to lie awake av nights schamin’ an’ plottin’ for the three av us. Orth’ris, me son, ’t is no matther av a few gallons av beer — no, nor twenty gallons — but tubs an’

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vats an' firkins in that sedan-chair. Who ut was, an' what ut was, an' how ut got there, we do not know ; but I know in my bones that you an' me an' Jock wid his sprained thumb will get a fortune thereby. Lave me alone, an' let me think.'

Meantime the palanquin stayed in my stall, the key of which was in Mulvaney's hands.

Pay-day came, and with it beer. It was not in experience to hope that Mulvaney, dried by four weeks' drought, would avoid excess. Next morning he and the palanquin had disappeared. He had taken the precaution of getting three days' leave 'to see a friend on the railway,' and the

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colonel, well knowing that the seasonal outburst was near, and hoping it would spend its force beyond the limits of his jurisdiction, cheerfully gave him all he demanded. At this point Mulvaney's history, as recorded in the mess-room, stopped.

Ortheris carried it not much further. 'No, 'e was n't drunk,' said the little man loyally, 'the liquor was no more than feelin' its way round inside of 'im; but 'e went an' filled that 'ole bloomin' palanquin with bottles 'fore 'e went off. 'E's gone an' 'ired six men to carry 'im, an' I 'ad to 'elp 'im into 'is nupshal couch, 'cause 'e would n't 'ear

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reason. 'E's gone off in 'is shirt an' trousies, swearin' tremenjuss — gone down the road in the palanquin, wavin' 'is legs out o' windy.'

‘Yes,’ said I, ‘but where?’

‘Now you arx me a question. 'E said 'e was goin' to sell that palanquin, but from observations what happened when I was stuffin' 'im through the door, I fancy 'e's gone to the new embankment to mock at Dearsley. 'Soon as Jock's off duty I'm goin' there to see if 'e's safe — not Mulvaney, but t' other man. My saints, but I pity 'im as 'elps Terence out o' the palanquin when 'e's once fair drunk!’

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‘He ’ll come back without harm,’ I said.

‘’Corse ’e will. On’y question is, what ’ll ’e be doin’ on the road? Killing Dearsley, like as not. ’E should n’t ’a gone without Jock or me.’

Reinforced by Learoyd, Ortheris sought the foreman of the coolie-gang. Dearsley’s head was still embellished with towels. Mulvaney, drunk or sober, would have struck no man in that condition, and Dearsly indignantly denied that he would have taken advantage of the intoxicated brave.

‘I had my pick o’ you two,’ he explained to Learoyd, ‘and

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you got my palanquin — not before I'd made my profit on it. Why'd I do harm when everything's settled? Your man *did* come here — drunk as Davy's sow on a frosty night — came a-purpose to mock me — stuck his head out of the door an' called me a crucified hodman. I made him drunker, an' sent him along. But I never touched him.'

To these things Learoyd, slow to perceive the evidences of sincerity, answered only, 'If owt comes to Mulvaney 'long o' you, I'll gripple you, clouts or no clouts on your ugly head, an' I'll draw t' throat twistyways, man. See there now.'

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The embassy removed itself, and Dearsley, the battered, laughed alone over his supper that evening.

Three days passed — a fourth and a fifth. The week drew to a close and Mulvaney did not return. He, his royal palanquin, and his six attendants, had vanished into air. A very large and very tipsy soldier, his feet sticking out of the litter of a reigning princess, is not a thing to travel along the ways without comment. Yet no man of all the country round had seen any such wonder. He was, and he was not ; and Learoyd suggested the immediate smashment of Dears-

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ley as a sacrifice to his ghost. Ortheris insisted that all was well, and in the light of past experience his hopes seemed reasonable.

‘When Mulvaney goes up the road,’ said he, ‘e’s like to go a very long ways up, specially when ’e’s so blue drunk as ’e is now. But what gits me is ’is not bein’ ’eard of pullin’ wool off the niggers somewheres about. That don’t look good. The drink must ha’ died out in ’im by this, unless ’e’s broke a bank, an’ then — Why don’t ’e come back? ’E did n’t ought to ha’ gone off without us.”

Even Ortheris’s heart sank at the end of the seventh day, for

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half the regiment were out scouring the countryside, and Learoyd had been forced to fight two men who hinted openly that Mulvaney had deserted. To do him justice, the colonel laughed at the notion, even when it was put forward by his much-trusted adjutant.

‘Mulvaney would as soon think of deserting as you would,’ said he. ‘No; he’s either fallen into a mischief among the villagers — and yet that is n’t likely, for he’d blarney himself out of the Pit; or else he is engaged on urgent private affairs — some stupendous devilment that we shall hear of at mess after it has been the round of the barrack-rooms. The worst

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of it is that I shall have to give him twenty eight days' confinement at least for being absent without leave, just when I most want him to lick the new batch of recruits into shape. I never knew a man who could put a polish on young soldiers as quickly as Mulvaney can. How does he do it?'

'With blarney and the buckle-end of a belt, sir,' said the adjutant. 'He is worth a couple of non-commissioned officers when we are dealing with an Irish draft, and the London lads seem to adore him. The worst of it is that if he goes to the cells the other two are neither to hold nor

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to bind till he comes out again. I believe Ortheris preaches mutiny on those occasions, and I know that the mere presence of Learoyd mourning for Mulvaney kills all the cheerfulness of his room. The sergeants tell me that he allows no man to laugh when he feels unhappy. They are a queer gang.'

'For all that, I wish we had a few more of them. I like a well-conducted regiment, but these pasty-faced, shifty-eyed, mealy-mouthed young slouchers from the depot worry me sometimes with their offensive virtue. They don't seem to have backbone enough to do anything but play

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cards and prowl round the married quarters. I believe I'd forgive that old villain on the spot if he turned up with any sort of explanation that I could in decency accept.'

'Not likely to be much difficulty about that, sir,' said the adjutant. 'Mulvaney's explanations are only one degree less wonderful than his performances. They say that when he was in the Black Tyrone, before he came to us, he was discovered on the banks of the Liffey trying to sell his colonel's charger to a Donegal dealer as a perfect lady's hack. Shackbolt commanded the Tyrone then.'

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‘Shackbolt must have had apoplexy at the thought of his ramping war-horses answering to that description. He used to buy unbacked devils, and tame them on some pet theory of starvation. What did Mulvaney say?’

‘That he was a member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, anxious to “sell the poor baste where he would get something to fill out his dimples.” Shackbolt laughed, but I fancy that was why Mulvaney exchanged to ours.’

‘I wish he were back,’ said the colonel; ‘for I like him and believe he likes me.’

That evening, to cheer our

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souls, Learoyd, Ortheris, and I went into the waste to smoke out a porcupine. All the dogs attended, but even their clamour — and they began to discuss the shortcomings of porcupines before they left cantonments — could not take us out of ourselves. A large, low moon turned the tops of the plume-grass to silver, and the stunted camelthorn bushes and sour tamarisks into the likenesses of trooping devils. The smell of the sun had not left the earth, and little aimless winds blowing across the rose-gardens to the southward brought the scent of dried roses and water. Our fire once started, and the dogs craftily

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disposed to wait the dash of the porcupine, we climbed to the top of a rain-scarred hillock of earth, and looked across the scrub seamed with cattle paths, white with the long grass, and dotted with spots of level pond-bottom, where the snipe would gather in winter.

‘This,’ said Ortheris, with a sigh, as he took in the unkempt desolation of it all, ‘this is sanguinary. This is unusually sanguinary. Sort o’ mad country. Like a grate when the fire’s put out by the sun.’ He shaded his eyes against the moonlight. ‘An’ there’s a loony dancin’ in the middle of it all. Quite right.

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I'd dance too if I wasn't so downheart.'

There pranced a Portent in the face of the moon — a huge and ragged spirit of the waste, that flapped its wings from afar. It had risen out of the earth ; it was coming towards us, and its outline was never twice the same. The toga, table-cloth, or dressing-gown, whatever the creature wore, took a hundred shapes. Once it stopped on a neighbouring mound and flung all its legs and arms to the winds.

‘ My, but that scarecrow ’as got ’em bad ! ’ said Ortheris. ‘ Seems like if ’e comes any further we’ll ’ave to argify with ’im.’

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Learoyd raised himself from the dirt as a bull clears his flanks of the wallow. And as a bull bellows, so he, after a short minute at gaze, gave tongue to the stars.

‘MULVAANEY! MULVAANEY!
A-hoo!’

Oh then it was that we yelled, and the figure dipped into the hollow, till, with a crash of rending grass, the lost one strode up to the light of the fire, and disappeared to the waist in a wave of joyous dogs! Then Learoyd and Ortheris gave greeting, bass and falsetto together, both swallowing a lump in the throat.

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‘You damned fool!’ said they, and severally pounded him with their fists.

‘Go easy!’ he answered; wrapping a huge arm round each. ‘I would have you to know that I am a god, to be treated as such — tho,’ by my faith, I fancy I’ve got to go to the guard-room just like a privit soldier.’

The latter part of the sentence destroyed the suspicions raised by the former. Any one would have been justified in regarding Mulvaney as mad. He was hatless and shoeless, and his shirt and trousers were dropping off him. But he wore one wondrous garment — a gigantic cloak

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that fell from collar bone to heel
— of pale pink silk, wrought all
over in cunningest needlework
of hands long since dead, with
the loves of the Hindu gods.
The monstrous figures leaped in
and out of the light of the fire
as he settled the folds round
him.

Ortheris handled the stuff respectfully for a moment while I was trying to remember where I had seen it before. Then he screamed, ‘What *’ave* you done with the palanquin? You’re wearin’ the linin’.

‘I am,’ said the Irishman, ‘an’ by the same token the *’broidery* is scrapin’ my hide off. I’ve

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lived in this sumpshus counterpane for four days. Me son, I begin to ondherstand why the naygur is no use. Widout me boots, an me trousies like an openwork stocking on a gyurl's leg at a dance, I begin to feel like a naygur-man — all fearful an' timoreous. Give me a pipe an' I'll tell on.'

He lit a pipe, resumed his grip of his two friends, and rocked to and fro in a gale of laughter.

'Mulvaney,' said Ortheris sternly, ''taint no time for laughin'. You've given Jock an' me more trouble than you're worth. You 'ave been absent

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without leave an' you'll go into cells for that; an' you 'ave come back disgustin'ly dressed an' most improper in the linin' o' that bloomin' palanquin. Instid of which you laugh. An' *we* thought you was dead all the time.'

'Bhoys,' said the culprit, still shaking gently, 'whin I've done my tale you may cry if you like, an' little Orth'ris here can thrample my inside out. Ha' done an' listen. My performinces have been stupenjus: my luck has been the blessed luck av the British Army — an' there's no betther than that. I went out dhrunk an' dhrinkin' in the palanquin,

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and I have come back a pink god. Did any of you go to Dearsley afther my time was up? He was at the bottom of ut all.'

'Ah said so,' murmured Lea-royd. 'To morrow ah'll smash t' face in upon his heead.'

'Ye will not. Dearsley's a jool av a man. Afther Ortheris had put me into the palanquin an' the six bearer-men were gruntin' down the road, I tuk thought to mock Dearsley for that fight. So I tould thim, "Go to the embankmint," and there, bein' most amazin' full, I shtuck my head out av the concern an' passed compliments wid Dearsley. I must ha' miscalled him out-

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rageous, for whin I am that way the power av the tongue comes on me. I can bare remimber tellin' him that his mouth opened endways like the mouth av a skate, which was throe afther Learoyd had handled ut ; an' I clear remimber his takin' no manner nor matter av offence, but givin' me a big dhrink of beer. 'Twas the beer did the thrick, for I crawled back into the palanquin, steppin' on me right ear wid me left foot, an' thin I slept like the dead. Wanst I half roused, an' begad the noise in my head was tremenjus — roarin' and rattlin' an' poundin', such as was quite new to me. "Mother av

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Mercy," thinks I, "phwat a concertina I will have on my shoulders whin I wake!" An' wid that I curls mysilf up to sleep before ut should get hould on me. Bhoys, that noise was not dhrink, 't was the rattle av a thrain !'

There followed an impressive pause.

'Yes, he had put me on a thrain — put me, palanquin an' all, an' six black assassins av his own coolies that was in his nefarious confidence, on the flat av a ballast-thruck, an we were rowlin' and bowlin' along to Benares. Glory be that I did not wake up thin an' introjuce mysilf to the coolies. As I was sayin', I slept

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for the bettther part av a day an' a night. But remimber you, that that man Dearsley had packed me off on wan av his material-thrains to Benares, all for to make me overstay my leave an' get me into the cells.'

The explanation was an eminently rational one. Benares lay at least ten hours by rail from the cantonments, and nothing in the world could have saved Mulvaney from arrest as a deserter had he appeared there in the apparel of his orgies. Dearsley had not forgotten to take revenge. Learoyd, drawing back a little, began to place soft blows over selected portions of Mulvaney's body. His

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thoughts were away on the embankment, and they meditated evil for Dearsley. Mulvaney continued —

‘Whin I was full awake the palanquin was set down in a street, I suspicioned, for I cud hear people passin’ an’ talkin’. But I knew well I was far from home. There is a queer smell upon our cantonments—a smell av dried earth and brick kilns wid whiffs av cavalry stable litter. This place smelt marigold flowers an’ bad water, an’ wanst somethin’ alive came an’ blew heavy with his muzzle at the chink av the shutter. “It’s in a village I am,” thinks I to mysilf, “an’ the

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parochial buffalo is investigatin' the palanquin." But anyways I had no desire to move. Only lie still whin you're in foreign parts an' the standin' luck av the British Army will carry ye through. That is an epigram. I made ut.

'Thin a lot av whisperin' divils surrounded the palanquin. "Take ut up," sez wan man. "But who'll pay us?" sez another. "The Maharanee's minister, av coorse," sez the man. "Oho!" says I to myself, "I'm a quane in me own right, wid a minister to pay me expenses. I'll be an emperor if I lie still long enough; but this

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is no village I've found." I lay quiet, but I gummed me right eye to a crack av the shutters, an' I saw that the whole street was crammed wid palanquins an' horses, an' a sprinklin' av naked priests all yellow powder an' tigers' tails. But I may tell you, Orth'ris, an' you, Learoyd, that av all the palanquins ours was the most imperial an' magnificent. Now a palanquin means a native lady all the world over, except whin a soldier av the Quane happens to be takin' a ride. "Women an' priests!" sez I. "Your father's son is in the right pew this time, Terence. There will be proceedin's." Six

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black divils in pink muslin tuk up the palanquin, an' oh! but the rowlin' an' the rockin' made me sick. Thin we got fair jammed among the palanquins — not more than fifty av them — an' we grated an' bumped like Queenstown potato-smacks in a runnin' tide. I cud hear the women gigglin' and squirkin' in their palanquins, but mine was the royal equipage. They made way for ut, an', begad, the pink muslin men o' mine were howlin' "Room for the Maharanee av Gokral-Seetarun." Do you know aught av the lady, sorr?'

'Yes,' said I. 'She is a very estimable old queen of the Cen-

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tral Indian States, and they say she is fat. How on earth could she go to Benares without all the city knowing her palanquin? ’

’T was the eternal foolishness av the naygur-man. They saw the palanquin lying loneful an’ forlornsome, an’ the beauty av ut, after Dearsley’s men had dhropped ut and gone away, an’ they gave ut the best name that occurred to thim. Quite right too. For aught we know the ould lady was thravellin’ *incog* — like me. I ’m glad to hear she ’s fat. I was no light weight mysilf, an’ my men were mortal anxious to dhrop me under a great big archway promiscuously

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ornamented wid the most improper carvin's an' cuttin's I iver saw. Begad! they made me blush — like a — like a Maharanee.'

‘The temple of Prithi-Devi,’ I murmured, remembering the monstrous horrors of that sculptured archway at Benares.

‘Pretty Devilskins, savin’ your presence, sorr! There was nothin’ pretty about ut, except me. ’T was all half dhark, an’ whin the coolies left they shut a big black gate behind av us, an’ half a company av fat yellow priests began pully-haulin’ the palanquins into a dharker place yet — a big stone hall full av

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pillars, an' gods, an' incense, an' all manner av similar thruck. The gate disconcerted me, for I perceived I wud have to go forward to get out, my retreat bein' cut off. By the same token a good priest makes a bad palanquin-coolie. Begad! they nearly turned me inside out draggin' the palanquin to the temple. Now the disposishin av the forces inside was this way. The Maharanee av Gokral-Seetarun — that was me — lay by the favour av Providence on the far left flank behind the dhark av a pillar carved with elephints' heads. The remainder av the palanquins was in a big half

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circle facing in to the biggest, fattest, an' most amazin' she-god that iver I dreamed av. Her head ran up into the black above us, an' her feet stuck out in the light av a little fire av melted butter that a priest was feedin' out av a butter-dish. Thin a man began to sing an' play on somethin' back in the dhark, an' 't was a queer song. Ut made my hair lift on the back av my neck. Thin the doors av all the palanquins slid back, an' the women bundled out. I saw what I'll niver see again. 'T was more glorious than thtransformations at a pantomime, for they was in pink an' blue an'

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silver an' red an' grass green, wid di'monds an' im'ralds an' great red rubies all over thim. But that was the least part av the glory. O bhoys, they were more lovely than the like av any loveliness in hiven; ay, their little bare feet were better than the white hands av a 'lord's lady, an' their mouths were like puck-ered roses, an' their eyes were bigger an' dharker than the eyes av any livin' women I've seen. Ye may laugh, but I'm speakin' truth. I niver saw the like, an' niver I will again.'

'Seeing that in all probability you were watching the wives and daughters of most of the kings of

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India, the chances are that you won't,' I said, for it was dawning on me that Mulvaney had stumbled upon a big Queens' Praying at Benares.

'I niver will,' he said mournfully. 'That sight does n't come twist to any man. It made me ashamed to watch. A fat priest knocked at my door. I did n't think he 'd have the insolence to disturb the Maharanee av Gokral-Seetarun, so I lay still. "The old cow's asleep," sez he to another. "Let her be," sez that. "'T will be long before she has a calf!" I might ha' known before he spoke that all a woman prays for in Injia—an' for matter o'

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that in England too—is childher. That made me more sorry I'd come, me bein', as you well know, a childless man.'

He was silent for a moment, thinking of his little son, dead many years ago.

'They prayed, an' the butter-fires blazed up an' the incense turned everything blue, an' between that an' the fires the women looked as tho' they were all ablaze an' twinklin'. They took hold av the she-god's knees, they cried out an' they threw themsleves about, an' that world-without-end-amen music was dhrivin' thim mad. Mother av Hiven! how they cried, an' the ould she-

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god grinnin' above thim all so scornful! The dhrink was dyin' out in me fast, an' I was thinkin' harder than the thoughts wud go through my head—thinkin' how to get out, an' all manner of nonsense as well. The women were rockin' in rows, their di'mond belts clickin', an' the tears runnin' out betune their hands, an' the lights were goin' lower an' dharker. Thin there was a blaze like lightnin' from the roof, an' that showed me the inside av the palanquin, an' at the end where my foot was, stood the livin' spit an' image o' myself worked on the linin'. This man here, ut was.'

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He hunted in the folds of his pink cloak, ran a hand under one, and thrust into the firelight a foot-long embroidered presentment of the great god Krishna, playing on a flute. The heavy jowl, the staring eye, and the blue-black moustache of the god made up a far-off resemblance to Mulvaney.

‘The blaze was gone in a wink, but the whole schame came to me thin. I believe I was mad too. I slid the off-shutter open an’ rowled out into the dhark behind the elephint-head pillar, tucked up my trousies to my knees, slipped off my boots an’ tuk a general hould av all the

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pink linin' av the palanquin. Glory be, ut ripped out like a woman's dhriss whin you tread on ut at a sergeants' ball, an' a bottle came with ut. I tuk the bottle an' the next minut I was out av the dhark av the pillar, the pink linin' wrapped round me most graceful, the music thunderin' like kettle-drums, an' a could draft blowin' round my bare legs. By this hand that did ut, I was Khrishna tootlin' on the flute — the god that the rig'-mental chaplain talks about. A sweet sight I must ha' looked. I knew my eyes were big, and my face was wax-white, an' at the worst I must ha' looked like a

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ghost. But they took me for the livin' god. The music stopped, and the women were dead dumb, an' I crooked my legs like a shepherd on a china basin, an' I did the ghost-waggle with my feet as I had done ut at the rig'-mental theatre many times, an' I slid acrost the width av that temple in front av the she-god tootlin on the beer bottle.'

'Wot did you toot?' demanded Ortheris the practical.

'Me? Oh !' Mulvaney sprang up, suiting the action to the word, and sliding gravely in front of us, a dilapidated but imposing deity in the half light. 'I sang—

Krishna Mulvaney

Only say
You 'll be Mrs. Brallaghan.
Don't say nay,
Charmin' Judy Callaghan.

I didn't know me own voice
when I sang. An' oh! 'twas
pitiful to see the women. The
darlin's were down on their
faces. Whin I passed the last
wan I cud see her poor little
fingers workin' one in another
as if she wanted to touch my feet.
So Idhrew the tail av this pink
overcoat over her head for the
greater honour, an' I slid into
the dhark on the other side av
the temple, and fetched up in
the arms av a big fat priest. All
I wanted was to get away clear.

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So I tuk him by his greasy throat an' shut the speech out av him. "Out!" sez I. "Which way, ye fat heathen?" — "Oh!" sez he. "Man," sez I. "White man, soldier man, common soldier man. Where in the name av confusion is the back door?" The women in the temple were still on their faces, an' a young priest was holdin' out his arms above their heads.

"This way," sez my fat friend, duckin' behind a big bull-god an' divin' into a passage. Thin I remimbered that I must ha' made the miraculous reputation av that temple for the next fifty years. "Not so fast," I sez, an'

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I held out both my hands wid a wink. That ould thief smiled like a father. I tuk him by the back av the neck in case he should be wishful to put a knife into me unbeknownst, an' I ran him up an' down the passage twice to collect his sensibilities! "Be quiet," sez he, in English. "Now you talk sense," I sez. "Fwhat'll you give me for the use av that most iligant palanquin I have no time to take away?" — "Don't tell," sez he. "Is ut like?" sez I. "But ye might give me my railway fare. I'm far from my home an' I've done you a service." Bhoys, 't is a good thing to be a priest. The

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ould man niver throubled himself to dhraw from a bank. As I will prove to you subsequint, he philandered all round the slack av his clothes an' began dribblin' ten-rupee notes, old gold mohurs, and rupees into my hand till I could hould no more.'

'You lie!' said Ortheris. 'You're mad or sunstrook. A native don't give coin unless you cut it out o' 'im. 'T ain't nature.'

'Then my lie an' my sunstroke is concealed under that lump av sod yonder,' retorted Mulvaney unruffled, nodding across the scrub. 'An' there's a dale more in nature than your

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squidgy little legs have iver taken you to Orth'ris, me son. Four hundred an' thirty-four rupees by my reckonin,' *an'* a big fat gold necklace that I took from him as a remimbrancer, was our share in that business.'

'An' 'e give it you for love?' said Ortheris.

'We were alone in that passage. Maybe I was a trifle too pressin', but considher fwat I had done for the good av the temple and the iverlastin' joy av those women. 'Twas cheap at the price. I wud ha' taken more if I cud ha' found ut. I turned the ould man upside down at the last, but he was milked dhry.

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Thin he opened a door in another passage an' I found myself up to my knees in Benares river-water, an' bad smellin' ut is. More by token I had come out on the river line close to the burnin' ghat and contagious to a cracklin' corpse. This was in the heart av the night, for I had been four hours in the temple. There was a crowd av boats tied up, so I tuk wan an' wint across the river. Thin I came home acrost country, lyin' up by day.'

‘How on earth did you manage?’ I said.

‘How did Sir Frederick Roberts get from Cabul to Candahar?’

Krishna Mulvaney

He marched an' he niver tould
how near he was to breakin' down.
That 's why he is fwhat he is.
An' now — ' Mulvaney yawned
portentously. ' Now I will go
an' give myself up for absince
widout leave. It 's eight an'
twenty days an' the rough end of
the colonel's tongue in orderly
room, any way you look at ut.
But 'tis cheap at the price.'

' Mulvaney,' said I softly. ' If
there happens to be any sort of
excuse that the colonel can in
any way accept, I have a notion
that you 'll get nothing more than
the dressing-gown. The new
recruits are in, and —— '

' Not a word more, sorr. Is

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ut excuses the old man wants?
'Tis not my way, but he shall
have thim. I'll tell him I was
engaged in financial operations
connected wid a church,' and he
flapped his way to cantonments
and the cells, singing lustily —

‘So they sent a corp’ril’s file,
An’ they put me in the gyard-room
For conduct unbecomin’ of a soldier.’

And when he was lost in the
midst of the moonlight we could
hear the refrain —

‘Bang upon the big drum, bash upon the
cymbals,
As we go marchin’ along, boys, oh !
For although in this campaign
There ’s no whiskey nor champagne,
We ’ll keep our spirits goin’ with a song,
boys !’

Krishna Mulvaney

Therewith he surrendered himself to the joyful and almost weeping guard, and was made much of by his fellows. But to the colonel he said that he had been smitten with sunstroke and had lain insensible on a villager's cot for untold hours; and between laughter and goodwill the affair was smoothed over, so that he could, next day, teach the new recruits how to 'Fear God, Honour the Queen, Shoot Straight, and Keep Clean.'

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